CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.526
15 August 1989

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 15 August 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. El Ghali Benhima (Morocco)

GE.89-63100/3798A

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The 526th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is called to order.

First of all I would like on behalf of the Conference to welcome the new representative of Kenya, Ambassador Thomas Ariba Ogada, who is with us for the first time since he took up his duties as head of his country's delegation to the Conference. I would like to pledge to him the close co-operation of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco in the work of the Conference.

Today the Conference begins its consideration of the reports of its ad hoc subsidiary bodies, as well as the consideration and adoption of its annual report to the United Nations General Assembly. However, in conformity with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, any representative who so wishes may raise any matter relevant to the work of the Conference.

On the list of speakers for today I have the representative of Peru, the Chairman of the Ad hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, and the representative of the German Democratic Republic. I now give the floor to the representative of Peru, Mr. Calderón, who will introduce the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, contained in document CD/946, on behalf of the Committee's Chairman, Ambassador de Rivero.

Mr. CALDERON (Peru) (translated from Spanish): First of all I should like to say how very pleased my delegation is at seeing you in the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament. Bearing in mind that August is a traditionally difficult month because it is the month when we conclude our work, I should like to reaffirm that you may count on our full and resolute co-operation in the discharge of your delicate task. I should also like to take this opportunity on behalf of my delegation to warmly welcome the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Mr. Rasaputram, as well as the new Ambassador of Kenya; we wish them every success and a happy stay in Geneva. My delegation has also learnt of the forthcoming departure of the distinguished Ambassadors Yamada of Japan and van Schaik of the Netherlands, and hence I am happy to convey our best wishes to them and reiterate our great pleasure in their participation in this Conference.

I have requested the floor this morning on behalf of Ambassador Oswaldo de Rivero, the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, in order to put before the Conference on Disarmament for its consideration the report of the Ad hoc Committee, which has been circulated in document CD/946. In general terms the above-mentioned report offers a brief description of the work done by the Ad hoc Committee during the current year, in keeping with the familiar guidelines. As planned, we re-established Contact Groups A and B to consider the two major issues which are before the Ad hoc Committee, namely the issue of radiological weapons in the "traditional" sense and the issue related to the prohibition of attacks against nuclear facilities. The co-ordination of Contact Group A devolved upon Mr. Csaba Györffy of Hungary, and the co-ordination of Contact Group B on Mr. Max Gevers of the Netherlands. In addition, at its meeting on 20 February the Ad hoc Committee set itself the objective for this year of making the texts relating to the two issues clearer and more concise than those produced last year, as a way of facilitating understanding of various approaches that still exist in respect of the handling of the two issues.

(Mr. Calderón, Peru)

It has been thanks to the hard work and special skill of Messrs. Györffy and Gevers that I am very pleased to inform this Conference that the Ad hoc Committee succeeded in achieving what it set out to do. As you can see in annexes I and II to the report of the Ad hoc Committee, we now have shortened and clear versions of the various positions, with a smaller number of footnotes and alternatives or variants. It is true that differences of a substantive nature still remain; however, this new version offers a clearer idea of the scope for future negotiations on each of the issues involved. It is for this reason that the report contained in document CD/946 recommends that the Conference on Disarmament should re-estbalish the Ad hoc Committee at next year's session, with annexes I and II serving as a basis for future work.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank Messrs. Györffy and Gevers most sincerely on behalf of the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee for the outstanding work they have done this year. I should also like to thank the distinguished delegations represented in the Ad hoc Committee for their extensive co-operation and active participation in our work. Similarly, I should like to extend our gratitude to the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament for its valuable help, and particularly to Mr. Michael Cassandra, the Secretary of the Ad hoc Committee, for his active and very wise contribution. These thanks are also addressed to the interpreters, translators and all those behind the scenes without whom the Ad hoc Committee would not have been able to fulfil its mandate satisfactorily.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Mr. Calderón for introducing the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons on behalf of its Chairman, and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador de Rivero and the members of the Ad hoc Committee on adopting the report before the date set down in the timetable agreed upon with the chairmen of the ad hoc committees. I now give the floor to the Chairman of the Ad hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, Dr. Ola Dahlman, to introduce the report of the Ad hoc Committee, which has been distributed as document CD/944.

Mr. DAHLMAN (Sweden): It is a pleasure to report on the Group's recent meeting, held from 24 July to 4 August, and to introduce its progress report contained in document CD/944. This was the twenty-eighth session of the Group, and experts and representatives from 26 countries and the World Meteorological Organization attended.

I will also introduce today the appendices to the Group's fifth report. This report, contained in document CD/903, was submitted to the CD in March 1989. These appendices, which are an integral part of the fifth report, contain detailed technical material of great importance for the design of the global seismological system. Due to their technical nature, these appendices are not being generally distributed but are available in the Group's working languages from the secretariat.

Four appendices provide detailed technical descriptions of the main components of the global system - the "CD stations", the national data centres, the international data centres and the global communication system. One appendix contains a list of references to almost 300 documents in all,

(Mr. Dahlman, Sweden)

containing scientific and technical material which has been produced during the last three years. Another appendix gives a short summary of these national contributions. This quite substantial amount of work, conducted in a number of countries, is the very basis for the work of the Group. The Group's scientific secretary, Dr. Frode Ringdal of Norway, played a key role in drafting this appendix. The support of the secretariat in preparing the Group's document and throughout our meetings here in Geneva is also greatly appreciated.

Most of the efforts during the recent meeting were devoted to the further planning of the Group's Second Large-scale Technical Test (GSETT-2). This test is, as you may recall, a global effort to test the various components of the modern data exchange system specified in the Group's fifth report. The purpose is also to test the interaction of these elements in a realistic environment, that is, to demonstrate that the system is able to cope with all the earthquakes that normally occur all over the globe. To be able to handle as many as several hundred earthquakes a day is an essential requirement for a global seismological system. GSETT-2 should thus provide a good overall basis to finalize the design of the global system.

The first phase of GSETT-2 started a year ago and will be completed by the end of the year. This phase consists of a large number of mostly small-scale national, bilateral or multilateral tests of individual components of the system. The aim of these tests is to prepare each station and national and international data centres for participation in the forthcoming tests of the entire global system. A number of tests have now been concluded, others are going on at present and some have still to be conducted. A review of these start-up tests has been compiled by the Co-ordinator of the test, Mr. Peter Basham of Canada, and is annexed to the progress report.

The second phase of GSETT-2 will start on 16 January 1990. This phase is designed as a gradual build-up of the testing of the entire global system. The first part of this phase will involve testing of the global system one day per week up to and including 6 March 1990. During these eight days both parameter and wave-form data, or, as we call them, level 1 and level 2 data, should be reported for all signals that are detected at participating stations. Data will be transmitted through various means of communication from national data centres to the four experimental international data centres (EIDCs).

At the four EIDCs the level 1 data will be analysed in accordance with procedures that are well established and were tested during the Group's first large-scale test in 1984. Final procedures for the analysis of level 2 data are so far not available, and will be developed co-operatively at the four individual EIDCs during the second phase of our large-scale test.

Much of the effort during the recent meeting was devoted to the establishment of initial instructions for the next, second phase of GSETT-2. These instructions, contained in the Group's conference room paper No. 190/Rev.1, are quite detailed and extensive and cover more than 100 pages. They are based on the Group's earlier experience and on national contributions and are fairly preliminary in nature. During the forthcoming eight days of testing, they will for the first time be applied to the

(Mr. Dahlman, Sweden)

operation of the entire global system. It is to be expected that some parts may need substantial revision when the experience of our initial testing is reviewed at the Group's next meeting.

No decision on the further schedule for GSETT-2 was taken at this meeting. It is, however, to be expected that the second phase will continue during the spring and summer of 1990. Also during this period testing will be limited to one or several days a week, and may also include a short period of full-scale testing. The purpose is to further develop the overall instructions for the system and to make sure that all participating national and international facilities are working properly. This extended period of testing will also enable additional countries which are not ready by the middle of January to join the test later during the spring of 1990.

The third phase, which will be a full-scale test of the entire system for an extended period of time, is the core of the test. It could in a way be considered the "flight-test" of the system, in which it should be demonstrated that all components can work properly together as an integral system in the actual environment of global seismicity. So far no timetable has been established for this phase, but it is reasonable to expect that it will be conducted over a period of two to three months in the autumn of 1990. The conduct of the third phase will require that all technical systems are working properly and that broad enough participation is secured.

During the fourth and last phase of GSETT-2 the result of this full-scale testing will be evaluated. The consequences of these new experiences for the design of the global system presented in the Group's fifth report have to be assessed, and modifications to the initial design may be needed.

In my view the technical preparations are well under way at the national facilities in those countries that have announced their intention of participating, and at the four experimental international data centres. Although I am sure that further tests will reveal both unforeseen technical difficulties and inadequacies in the suggested procedures, I am quite confident that the remaining scientific and technical issues will be solved through continued testing during the first half of 1990 prior to our full-scale test.

My main and serious concern relates to participation in GSETT-2. So far 21 countries have announced their intention to participate and provide data from 41 stations in all. The geographical distribution of these stations is uneven, with no station in Africa or South America and few in Asia. As stated in the progress report, the Ad hoc Group considers it most essential to achieve broader participation in order to meet the objectives of GSETT-2. In the Group's first large-scale test in 1984, 37 countries contributed data from 75 stations in all. At that level of participation, the coverage of the southern hemisphere in particular was also far from satisfactory.

The technical requirements on the participants in GSETT-2 are higher than in 1984, as the present test involves the routine exchange of large volumes of wave-form data. Seismological facilities have, however, been substantially improved in a number of countries in recent years. High-capacity communication channels are also readily available today on a global scale.

(Mr. Dahlman, Sweden)

From a technical point of view a large number of additional countries should be able to participate in GSETT-2. In some countries technical preparations for the test are well under way, but the final political decision to participate has not yet been taken. To secure participation in GSETT-2 at least similar to that of the 1984 experiment, it is important that a larger number of CD member countries should actively participate in the experiment. So far only 15 CD members have announced their intention to participate.

In the Ad hoc Group we also enjoy active participation from countries which are not members of the CD, and so far six non-members have announced their participation. Wider participation by countries not members of the CD would be important to secure adequate global coverage. It is of special importance that more countries located in or close to the southern hemisphere should join the experiment to provide observations from earthquakes all over the globe and facilitate a test of the world-wide communication channels.

Finally, I wish to re-emphasize that the second phase of the test, which will begin in January 1990, is a preparatory stage to enable participants to join the global system and overcome any technical problems they may encounter. The full-scale test is expected to start more than a year from now. There should therefore be ample opportunities for new participants to join the experiment and thereby provide the broader participation needed to meet the objectives of our large-scale test.

For countries which so far have not joined in the work of the Ad hoc Group, and who wish to participate in the test or explore possible ways of participating, the Co-ordinator of the test, Mr. Peter Basham, and myself will be pleased to offer our assistance to explore and arrive at proper arrangements.

The Ad hoc Group suggests that its next session, subject to approval by the Conference on Disarmament, should be convened from 19 to 30 March 1990 in Geneva.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Chairman of the Ad hoc Group of Scientific Experts for introducing the Group's report, which appears in document CD/944.

In accordance with the agreement reached by the Chair with the chairmen of the ad hoc committees concerning the timetable for the adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies, I intend to put before the Conference for decision next Thursday the Ad hoc Committee report contained in document CD/946, as well as the recommendation in paragraph 12 of the report of the Ad hoc Group of Scientific Experts concerning the dates of the Group's next session.

I now give the floor to the representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Dietze.

Mr. DIETZE (German Democratic Republic): I take this opportunity to warmly welcome in our midst Ambassador Rasaputram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Ogada of Kenya. I wish them much success in the performance of their tasks. Our delegations have always maintained good co-operation, which, I am certain, will be continued in future.

(Mr. Dietze, German Democratic Republic)

As I have already said on other occasions, it is a less pleasant duty to say goodbye to colleagues leaving us. Ambassador Yamada and Ambassador van Schaik intend to leave Geneva soon. With their personal commitment, great experience and diplomatic skill, as well as their well-known ability to foster personal contacts, I think they have contributed to resolving a good many issues within the work of the CD. In taking leave of our two colleagues, I wish them good health, happiness and success in their new assignments.

The Ad hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events has wound up its session. The progress report on the twenty-eighth session is set forth in document CD/944, and we have just followed with great interest the introduction of the report given by the Chairman of the Group, Dr. Ola Dahlman. On behalf of the Group of Socialist Countries I should like to express high appreciation for the qualified work carried out by the scientific experts and their Chairman pertaining to the difficult technical questions associated with a global system for international seismic data exchange.

The Ad hoc Group of Scientific Experts has in our view yielded considerable results during its session. The agreed comprehensive and detailed material effectively supplements the fifth report of the GSE, which was presented to the CD as document CD/903 in March this year. This material, comprising seven appendices, constitutes, in our opinion, a solid foundation for further conceptual development with regard to a global seismic data exchange system for monitoring compliance with a comprehensive nuclear test ban. Moreover, a number of the recommendations contained in the fifth report of the GSE have already been put to good use for the conduct of the global seismic data exchange test, GSETT-2. Phase 1 of GSETT-2 has been under way since Autumn last year, and its second phase is to start, as the Chairman said, in January 1990.

We think the Group has soundly reviewed the present status of phase 1, i.e. the start-up tests for GSETT-2. What is discernible are the endeavours of many countries to proceed with the development of their national facilities in such a way that they will be able to participate successfully in the later phases of GSETT-2.

One of the most important results achieved at the recent session of the GSE is, to our mind, the fact that thanks to the constructive collaboration of all parties it has been possible to elaborate initial instructions for conducting phase 2 of the second technical test. Surely, the instructions need to be formulated in greater detail at the next session of the GSE on the basis of the results reached in the course of experimental work.

The countries on behalf of which I am speaking consent to the dates suggested in the progress report CD/944 for the start of phase 2 and the convening of the next session of the Group of Scientific Experts in 1990. As for the German Democratic Republic, I can declare that it will actively participate in GSETT-2. We will do so since this international project could contribute to progress towards a comprehensive nuclear test ban. The prohibition of all nuclear weapon tests continues to be a pivotal issue for us,

(Mr. Dietze, German Democratic Republic)

because it is the key to real nuclear disarmament. On that score, the German Democratic Republic together with the other Warsaw Treaty member countries advocated at their recent Bucharest meeting that, firstly, the immediate cessation of nuclear weapon tests should be discussed single-mindedly at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament; secondly, the verification protocols to the USSR-United States agreements of 1974 and 1976 should be rapidly finalized, as their implementation would help to expedite the complete cessation of nuclear tests; and thirdly, the applicability of the 1963 Moscow Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in three environments should be extended to underground testing in order to promote the prohibition of all nuclear tests.

The date of 9 August 1945 should remain for us both a reminder and an incentive. Nagasaki must without fail be the last place which in the minds of peoples is associated with a nuclear holocaust. This observation made by 450,000 inhabitants of that sorely afflicted town has our unanimous approval. It was against that background that, one year after the significant International Meeting on Nuclear-weapon-free Zones, the German Democratic Republic convened a meeting of an International Liaison Office in Berlin with a view to deliberating on what needs to be done henceforth to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. And it is in this spirit that the German Democratic Republic lends its support to the appeal made by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to the United States Congress to impose, on the basis of reciprocity, a moratorium on nuclear explosions and the complete cessation of all nuclear testing.

We advocate the holding of a conference on the extension of the treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in three environments to underground testing. The German Democratic Republic has signed a letter on this subject which was sent to the depositary States, since it believes that in the wake of such a conference the CD could receive decisive momentum. This would undoubtedly also have favourable impact on the strengthening of the régime governing the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in our minds.

All of us bear in mind that peace, and in particular peace in Europe, is fragile if it is a peace built on weapons. The very existence of humankind is imperilled by virtue of the overkill capacity of stockpiled weapon potentials. Already enormous resources and creative potential are needed to destroy the huge arsenals of arms without inflicting damage on mankind. Is it not the logic of human thinking that bids us to halt the modernization of nuclear weapons, to stop the development of new destruction potentials? Is it not time to give up striving for superiority and clinging to doctrines of deterrence?

The Warsaw Treaty States favour doing away with asymmetries that have arisen in certain weapon systems or armed forces and giving the structure of the armed forces a strictly defensive character. They hold that while each maintains its own security, neither side should have the means to stage a surprise attack against the other side or offensive operations in general. We think it is imperative to search for solutions which make nuclear weapons dispensable for all, without interfering with the security of any side.

(Mr. Dietze, German Democratic Republic)

It is also for this reason that the Warsaw Treaty countries offered to open separate talks on the reduction and eventual elimination of tactical nuclear arms. It is quite understandable that my country should have a vital interest in this move. There is no sound argument for postponing such talks, making them contingent on the results reached in other negotiations or limiting their scope to shorter-range Soviet and American land-based nuclear missile systems.

The danger of a surprise attack will not be eliminated as long as tactical nuclear weapons remain on the European continent. To put it another way, their early removal would facilitate world-wide nuclear disarmament. This is our point of view, and we therefore urge that negotiations on tactical nuclear weapons should be started without delay.

To wind up my statement, let me air another idea. The problem of establishing a subsidiary organ of the Conference to discuss the issue of a nuclear test ban in a businesslike manner still awaits a mutually agreed solution. In the past months many delegations, and in particular Ambassador Yamada of Japan, have undertaken great efforts with a view to arriving at such a solution, and we feel that the remaining obstacles are not insurmountable and that positive starting-points for further work on a nuclear test ban can be agreed upon in the course of this session. This would give decisive impetus for imparting further dynamism to the work of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the German Democratic Republic for his statement. I have no more speakers on my list. Does anyone wish to take the floor? It would seem not.

As I informed you at the 525th plenary meeting, the Conference is to hold an informal meeting today, immediately after the plenary meeting, to begin the first reading of the technical part of its report to the General Assembly. I would also like to inform you that working papers CD/WP.371, 372 and 373, concerning the substantive paragraphs on agenda items 2, 3 and 7 respectively, are available in the delegations' pigeon-holes. As for the substantive paragraphs on item 1 of the Conference's agenda, the text will be available in English on Thursday 17 August and in the other languages on Friday 18 August.

I should like to inform you that the informal open-ended consultations on the report of the Ad hoc Committee under agenda item 5 will be held immediately after the plenary meeting in conference room H-3.

There are no other matters to be considered, and I will therefore close this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday 17 August at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.